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ABSTRACT

Research on leadership in gifted education is reviewed, focusing on studies conducted with various age groups in education settings. Leadership research is examined through three general approaches: the trait approach, leadership styles, and the situational approach. A leadership training model for high-school students is presented, based on the Leadership Program of the United States Chamber of Commerce. It emphasizes formation of a cohesive group of gifted students. The group participates in training sessions on school district organizational structure and on leadership opportunities within the school district, and subsequently works together to produce a creative and valid solution to a school-related problem. (JDD)

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LEARNING TO BE A LEADER

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LEARNING TO BE A LEADER

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." - John F. Kennedy (remarks prepared for delivery at the Trade Mart in Dallas on November 22, 1963).

Leadership training deserves an obvious place in our school curriculum. However, even the word 'leadership' connotes a vagueness. James Burns, in doing research for his landmark book, Leadership, discovered more than 130 definitions (Burns, 1978). Stogdill (1974), in a review of 5,000 leadership studies found scores of definitions. Some defined leadership as personality and its effects, some as the art of influencing people, others as an act of behavior, the initiation of structure, or a power relationship. In the end, no single definition of leadership has emerged as the basis for a researcher to form a theoretical base.

For purposes of this paper, Burns (1978) definition, in which schools enhance the leadership potential for all students, will be used: "I define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations--the wants, needs, aspirations and expectations--of both leaders and followers. And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and the followers' values and motivations."

The study of leadership has been undertaken through three general approaches: the trait approach, leadership

style, and the situational approach. Stogdill (1974) suggests the following trait profile as characteristic of successful leaders:

"The leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence i pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem-solving, drive to exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, ability to influence other persons' behavior, and capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand."

The most current approach is the situational (Blanchard, 1985). Since most leadership research was done for application to the military, management, and business and industrial organizations, educators to substitute "teacher" where "manager" is mentioned. Blanchard's model teaches in clear, simple terms why "nothing is so unequal as the equal treatment of unequals".

He describes why a teacher must fit his/her style to the needs of the individual, how to diagnose a situation correctly so you know when to delegate, support, or direct, and how to contract with students for the leadership style that fits them best. It teaches how to become a flexible and successful leader. Students being trained for a leadership role need to experience this role modeling of leadership.

Magoon (1981) agrees with Blanchard that leadership training should be based on the principles of participatory democracy. He believes leadership experiences must be reinforced in simulated and real situations to facilitate the application of these skills and attitudes in student's future leadership settings.

When students graduate to the real world, "followership" is as important as leadership. In a recent letter to the nation's graduates, Harvard University Business School Professor John P. Cotter wrote, "Getting others to cooperate, leading others, coping with complex power and influences and people problems--well, that's at the heard of alot of jobs today. The first lesson is that work means operating in a web of relationships with your peers, your boss and the people who work under you."

If educational institutions wish to view leadership as interaction between group members to improve their problem-solving abilities or their ability to set and attain goals, they must learn to apply the studies of leadership done in other segments of society while at the same time begin to do some significant research in the educational arena.

The purpose of this paper is to review the research done on leadership in gifted education, to point out the overlaps between the practices of gifted education and models of leadership that have emerged from other disciplines, and to propose a leadership training program that can be used at

multi-grade levels. Leadership in this instance is eclectic in nature. It will presume the students have the traits necessary to be a leader and will concentrate on developing leadership style and adaptability to situations where leadership is required.

Some research has been done with various age groups in an education setting. Perez (1982) found in studies done with pre-schoolers that early development of verbal skills, sensitivity to structure, and independence appear to contribute in an important way to the determination of pre-school leadership.

Chauvin and Karnes (1984) discovered that gifted elementary school children feel they naturally possess many of the traits they perceive in a leader. They concluded these children can benefit from a curriculum that stresses the fundamentals of group dynamics and interpersonal skills.

Identifying gifted leaders using multiple sources of information was a study done with fifth and sixth-graders (Friedman, Friedman, & Van Dyke, 1984). Their findings recommend to teachers and administrators seeking to identify the leadership gifted in their student population that they consult self, peer, and teacher nominations before making their selections.

Hensel and Franklin (1983) used DeHann's (1958) theory of emergent leadership, which states that leadership is developed spontaneously through group interaction rather than by elected leadership based on popularity, to do research

with elementary and junior high students. They found two types of leaders: those who are concerned with interpersonal relations and those who were committed to the task. It is suggested by these authors that school adapt leadership materials developed for adult populations to use in skill development for emergent leadership with younger populations.

The Blake/Mouton managerial grid based on preference for people vs. production concern was the basis of a study done by Lamb and Busse (1983) with gifted middle-school students. By altering the classroom environment to empower the students with responsibilities and leadership opportunity, the students showed a significant change from a self-defensive, ineffectual style of leadership to a sharing of authority and allowing others to become leaders in the group.

In a leadership trait study (Karnes, 1984) done with gifted adolescents, the Leadership Potential Score of the High School Personality Questionnaire failed to differentiate between individuals who held at least one elected leadership position and individuals who held no such position. However, the analysis of the HSPQ profiles revealed that elected leaders tend to be tenderminded, sensitive, tense, group dependent, and conscientious.

Tom Peters and Nancy Austin, authors of A Passions for Excellence: The Leadership Difference, (1985) attempted to take the framework and findings of their book and apply them to the school setting. They found the message to be the same in excellent schools.

As it is in excellent corporations: a crystal-clear and simple vision, the leader as chief salesman inside and out, and the constant, blatant, consistent, obsessive use of symbols. It is the foundation on which all else rests. In addition, there is emphasis on doing something for somebody else.

The single most significant message of Peters and Waterman's book, In Search of Excellence, (1983) was this: "Treat your people as adults, conscientiously and creatively. (Schools can substitute "students" for "people") Management (the faculty) gets exactly the word force (student body and admittance) is deserves, not one iota more and not one iota less."

Much of the success of outstanding school leaders is the fact that they really do live "for the kids". Likewise, the magic of any superb teacher is empathy for each child and where each child is in his or her unique development.

Peters and Austin think the essence of leadership is the same in both education and management. Vision, energy, empathy, persistence, passion, attention to detail, a picture of the goal are all essential ingredients. They think most who have written about leadership have missed the boat.

How, then can schools provide leadership training for their students that synthesizes the excellence of management with the excellence of education? The following leadership training model for students is based the Leadership Program of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Each year the local chamber send out letters to the businesses in their communities soliciting nominations for employees who are leaders and would possibly be interested in learning more about their community in order they might become the community leaders of the future. The nominations are then screened by a Chamber committee and a class of 20 persons is invited to attend the course.

There is a charge of $300 which is usually borne by the company of the nominee. Each candidate signs a statement that they will attend 6 full days and will receive recognition for having done so at the end of the class. The first meeting of the class is a cocktail party. It is purely social; members from proceeding classes are there to give encouragement and personal testimonies about their experiences in previous years.

The six days are spread out over a 12 week period, meeting one day every two weeks. The sessions last from 8 until 4 and lunches are provided. Each day has a specific theme. For example:

Day One:	History and development of the City and County
Day Two:	State Government
Day Three:	City and County Government
Day Four:	Education in the City and Tour of the City
Day Five:	The Fine Art of Leadership
Day Six:	Leadership Opportunities

Each day is structured with lectures and discussions and invited guests make presentations. The purpose of this program is to acquaint the participants with how the "system" works. If one is to operate in a system, then you need to know how it is structured. It also introduces the future leaders to the present and past leaders of their community and state. At the end of the six sessions, a graduation dinner is held with a speaker and plaques are presented to the class members. By this time, the group has formed a cohesive whole as a result of their many experiences together.

Time has shown that members of these leadership seminar have gone on to participate in their community's projects. Whether they volunteer for future community words or not, the community is richer by having a more well-informed core population.

High-school students can be given the same opportunity to know the system and the community in order that they might become more will-informed and active in their own right. An awareness of school and governmental structures develops a sense of ownership and of significance (Lindsay, 1981). If effectively trained, students will develop a sense of significance and their behavior will take on a new significance. Values will become an integrated part of this behavior. Being aware of values shapes ones behavior and a positive direction. Valuing as a process is a key component

to the following model of leadership training for gifted and talented students.

1. Applications for the leadership project are make available to students. They are submitted to a selection committee. Criteria for selection would include: previous involvement in other leadership roles, recommendation by teachers, parents, neighbors, administrators, or peers, and an above-average academic record.

2. Selections of participants are made and students are informed of their acceptance to the program. Meeting times are designated and students are responsible for making up the work and obtaining permission to participate from their teachers.

3. The first event is purely social. It is held outside of school at a private home. Seminar leaders are invited, as well as the sponsoring individuals. There is no formal program, only a brief introduction of each participant. The main purpose is to give the program an importance and to spotlight the selected students.

4. The leadership training class will last twelve weeks. It will meet two hour every other week. The class will eat lunch together before or after each session. This creates a cohesiveness for future leadership projects the group will hopefully choose to pursue. The program is as follows:

Day One: History & Development of the School District and Its Relationship to the

Town.

Day Two: Federal and State Laws and Their Relationship to Education

Day Three: Organizational Structure of the School District

Day Four: How Your School is Organized

Day Five: The Fine Art of Leadership

Day Six: Leadership Opportunities

There will be a banquet on the evening of the final session. At this banquet, each participant will be given a plaque and recognized personally. A leader form the community will be invited to address the group and they will be encouraged to continue on as a group to fulfill a common leadership goal.

Since evaluation is an important part of any seminar, the group will meet one final time for an evaluation session. These evaluations will form the basis for the leadership program the following year.

The last chapter of this leadership group is when they all pull together to produce a creative and valid solution to a school-related problem, or conceive a product that is necessary for the maintenance and advancement of the institution where they are educated. Hopefully, groups will have acquired a felling of significance, a oneness of values and behaviors, and a sense of acknowledging and being acknowledged in their role as leaders by having participated in the leadership project.

"The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness. If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."

--Kahil Gibran

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